[Vol. 1.] THE [No. 2.]

WEEKLY VISITANT.

"Be thou the first *our efforts* to befriend;
"His praise is lost who stays till all commend."

SALEM—WEDNESDAY EVENING, JANUARY 8, 1806.

ORIGINAL ESSAYS.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

ON AMERICAN LITERATURE.

No. II.

Many European philosophers, for some time imagined, that human nature had degenerated in America. An attachment to systems they had formed, and an ignorance of the history of the country gave rise to these strange opinions. It is with a view of proving this, that the Abbe Raynal says, "America has not produced one poet." If it were true, the atmosphere, soil and produce of the country must have debased the descendants of the Europeans, who formed its population.

Had these philosophers considered the instances of good conduct and political wisdom, displayed by the Americans during the revolution, they must have drawn different conclusions. But they either were ignorant of them, or supposed, that the production of poetry was the only evidence of genius or talents. As the Europeans had produced sublime poetry, and the Americans, who were their descendants, had produced none at all, it was sufficient evidence to them of the degeneracy of the latter.

Allowing that America had not produced a poet; so far from proving a general degeneracy, it would not even shew a deficiency of poetical genius. No people, under similar circumstances, in so short a period from its first existence, ever having produced any thing worthy of being transmitted to future times. Greece, till the colonies who settled it had become populous nations, produced no poet, whose name or whose works have been handed down. Homer wrote not till five hundred years after the Trojan war. Rome had not produced a poet till virtue and liberty were extinguished. These instances are sufficient to prove, that a nation may neglect particular things, without being deficient in the necessary talents.

It may be objected, that no parallel case can be drawn from history, as every nation there mentioned, except perhaps the Carthaginians, grew up from a savage state, and therefore it is not to be wondered that they, who had no examples to follow, should for so long a period be wanting in the production of poetical works. But that the Americans, on the contrary, came from nations highly civilized, where the art of poetry was brought to perfection; and that, therefore, if they had not degenerated, they should have produced works of equal merit with the mother countries.

But the circumstance of coming from civilized nations, was of very little advantage to the first settlers, except as their knowledge enabled them to defend themselves from the incursions of the savages. Their mother countries were at such a vast distance, that all supblies were necessarily very precarious, and the constant labour of the whole was necessary to supply the deficiency. This formed habits entirely foreign to the study of the sciences, or the cultivation of thc arts. Nay, the knowledge they brought with them, so far from being advanced, declined of necessity; as every one was too much employed in procuring subsistence to attend to transmitting their knowledge to their children. Such education as they had was almost entirely unconnected with the belles-lettres. When seminaries for the advancement of knowledge had been established and the necessary information acquired by some, no opportunity occurred to display their acquirements, and different occupations made such acquirements fade from their minds. When these causes ceased to retard the progress of the arts, the attention of the people became immediately directed towards them, and literature and science began to display themselves, with evident marks of future greatness.

The sciences have been studied with effect, and works of fancy have been produced which the proudest genius of Europe would not blush to own. A slight examination of some of these works, will be sufficient to shew the truth of this assertion.

MISCELLANY.

FROM SMITH's THEORY OF MORAL SENTIMENTS.

Let us suppose that the great empire of China, with all its myriads of inhabitants, was suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake, and let us consider how a man of humanity in Europe, who had no sort of connexion with that part of the world, would be affected upon receiving intelligence of this dreadful calamity. He would, I imagine, first of all, express very strongly his sorrow for the misfortune of that unhappy people, he would make many melancholy reflection upon the precariousness of human life, and the vanity of all the labours of man, which could thus be annihilated in a moment. He

would too, perhaps, if he was a man of speculation, enter into many reasonings concerning the effects which this disaster might produce upon the commerce of Europe and the trade and business of the world in general. And when all this fine philosophy was over, when all these humane sentiments had been once fairly expressed, he would pursue his business or his pleasure, take his repose or his diversion, with the same ease and tranquiltiy, as if no such accident had happened. The most frivolous disaster which could befal himself would occasion a more real disturbance. If he was to lose his little finger to-morrow, he would not sleep to-night; but provided he never saw them, he will snore with the most profound security over the ruin of a hundred millions of his brethren, and the destruction of that immense multitude seems plainly an object less interesting to him, than this paltry misfortune of his own. To prevent therefore, this paltry misfortune to himself would a man of humanity be willing to sacrifice the lives of a hundred millions of his brethren, provided he had never seen them? Human nature starties with horror at the thought, and the world, in its greatest depravity and corruption, never produced such a villain as could be capable of entertaining it. But what makes this difference? When our passive feelings are almost always so sordid and so selfish, how comes it that our active principles should often be so generous and so noble? When we are always so much more deeply affected by whatever concerns ourselves, than by whatever concerns other men; what is it which prompts the generous, upon all occasions, and the mean upon many, to sacrifice their own interests to the greater interests of others? It is not the soft power of humanity, it is not that feeble spark of benevolence which Nature has lighted up in the human heart, that is thus capable of counteracting the strongest impulses of self-love. It is a stronger power, a more forcible motive, which exerts itself upon such occasions. It is reason, principle, conscience, the inhabitant of the breast, the man within, the great judge and arbiter of our conduct. It is he who, whenever we are about to act so as to affect the happiness of others, calls to us with a voice capable of astonishing the most presumptuous of our passions, that we are but one of the multitude, in no respect better than any other in it; and that when we prefer ourselves so shamefully and so blindly to others, we become the proper objects of resentment, abhorrence, and execration. It is from him only that we learn the real littleness of ourselves, and of whatever relates to ourselves, and the natural misrepresentations of self-love can be corrected only by the eye of this impartial spectator. It is he who shows us the propriety of generosity and the deformity of injustice; the propriety of resigning the greatest interests of our own, for the yet greater interests of others, and the deformity of doing the smallest injury to another, in order to obtain the greatest benefit to ourselves. It is not the love of our neighbour, it is not the love of mankind, which upon many occasions prompts us to the practice of those divine virtues. It is a stronger love, a more powerful affection which generally takes place upon such occasions, the love of what is honourable and noble, of the grandeur, and dignity, and superiority of our own characters.

FROM THE NEW CYCLOPEDIA.

AMADEUS NINTH, Count of Savoy, was surnamed the "Happy" on account of his virtue and piety, his readiness to forgive those who offended, his love of justice, and his study to promote the welfare of his subjects. He succeeded Lewis in 1464, and though his bodily infirmities prevented him from

engaging in any great exploits, he acquired and maintained a very exemplary character. He was eminently distinguished by the benevolence of his disposition. Being once asked by a courtier whether he kept hounds; he pointed to a great number of poor people, who were seated at tables eating and drinking, and replied, "these are my hounds, with whom I go in chace of Heaven." When he was told, that his alms would exhaust his resources: "Take the collar of my order," he said, "sell it and relieve my people."

BAIT EL-LAHAM, the ancient Bethlehem, in Geography, a town of Syria, in the pachalic of Damascus, is a village about two leagues South East of Jerusalem, seated on an eminence in a country full of hills and vallies. The adjacent soil is the best in all these districts; so that fruits, vines, olives and sesanum succeed here extremely well; and nothing is wanting but cultivation. They reckon about 600 men in this village capable of occasionally bearing arms; and occasions of this kind frequently occur, sometimes to resist the pacha, sometimes to make war with the adjacent villages, and sometimes in consequencc of intestine divisions. Of these 600 men, about 100 are Latin Christians, who have a vicar dependent on the great convent at Jerusalem. The whole trade formerly consisted in the manufacture of beads; but not finding a sufficient vent for them, they have resumed the cultivation of their lands. They make a white wine, which justifies the former celebrity of the wines of Judea, but it has the property of being very heady. The necessity of uniting for their common defence, prevails over their religious differeuces, and induces the Christians here to live in tolerable harmony with their fellow citizens the Mahometans. Both are of the party called Yamani, which, with its opposite, called Kaisi, divides the whole of Palestine into two factions, that are perpetually at variance. The courage of these peasants has been frequently tried, and renders them formidable through the whole country.

A SHIP THE SCHOOL OF SOCIABILITY.—Every one knows, for every one must feel, that the first link that unites man to man is mutual weakness and mutual wants. But how various are the sympathies which spring from this principle of self-preservation and security, when modified by the affections of nature! Perhaps there is not a condition in human life in which one is so soon conducted to a knowledge of that infinite skill with which heaven has formed its rational creation here, for the several purposes of virtue and enjoyment, as in the isolated station of a ship's company, exposed to the same hazards, and impressed with a sense of the reciprocal dependencies resulting from their situation. Removed from relatives and friends, the social compact of comrades and brother sailors, fills up the aching void; companion·ip ripens into friendship, and mutual confidence keeps alive the generous affections of each.

How often do you see the cheerful glass, drunk to the health of the far remote wife and sweetheart, meet the quivering lip and starting tear! and see the hard but sympathetic hand of an honest messmate extended with assumed hilarity, to grasp that of his brother, in this moment of tender recollection! How often do you listen there to the cheering tale of absence being forgotten in the heartfelt joy of hearing again the welcome of those whom they loved! It is not a romance. Such are the men who contemplate the wonders of the deep.

Anonymous.

The temperate zone of a moderate fortune, equally removed from high and low life, is most favorable for the permanence of friendship.

The evils that a man is born to endure, he ought to bear without repining; remembering, that fickleness is the characteristic of fortune; that sorrows surmounted sweeten life; and that the highest human attainment is a contented mind.

But, ah! how rare's the thoughtful breast,
How few will own they have been blest,
Or at life's close depart contented
With the rich feast that life presented!

ORIGINAL POETRY.

COMMUNICATED FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

REASON.

O Reason! faithful guide to peace,
How few are rul'd by thee?
How soon might every discord cease,
Wert thou alone to be

The happy monarch, whose command
Might all our actions sway,
Whose gentle check, whose tender hand
The roughest might obey.

No dire oppression from afar,
Would rack the people's breast,
No drunken broils or needless war
Would break the Soldier's rest.

Religion's pure unspotted law,
(Too oft an errant tool,
To keep the rustic crew in awe,
And cloak the bigot fool,)

Would then in brightest colors shine,
Reliev'd from black deceit,
The harden'd atheist turn divine,
And rogues forget to cheat;

No more the wretched's cry in vain
Would reach the miser's door;
No more would tyrants laws maintain
To rob the unhappy poor;

No more would innocence betray'd,
Of injuries complain;
No more would sigh the constant maid
For the unfaithful swain;

No more would cruelty be thought
A sacrifice divine;
No more would impious men be brought
To kneel at Satan's shrine;

No more would th' avaricious knave,
Betray his friend for gold;
For thou could'st tell him, in the grave
There's nothing bought or sold;

And though his long ill-gotten gold
May feast his eyes to-day,
Yet may to-morrow's sun behold
Himself to worms a prey!

What's then, mistaken man, this wealth,
Of which thou mak'st thy boast?
Will that from death procure thee health,
Or save the soul it lost?

Ah, no! that sage, severe, yet just,
Nor words nor bribe can charm,
Thy blameless life, thy virtues, must
Alone his rage disarm.

Would'st thou such endless riches gain
As never can decay,
Ambition's powerful charm disdain,
That short-liv'd winter's day.

And to be great, be good and wise,
Be merciful and brave,
Do not the widow's tears despise,
Or triumph o'er the slave:

For though thou mighty art this hour,
A time at length may be,
When those thou scorn'st will mock thy power,
And be more fam'd than thee.

Ah! think on this, and be no more
The horrid thing thou art;
But all thy guardian's aid implore
To fortify thy heart.

Then be a Knight in virtues cause,
And faithful to thy trust;
Would'st thou consult but reason's laws
They'd teach thee to be just.

For wheresoe'er she doth reside,
Immortal crowns are given;
May she e'er be my Abias guide,
And point her way to Heaven.

REMEMBER

SELECTED POETRY.

THE WINTER'S NIGHT.

BY SELLECK OSBORNE.

The thick'ning shades of night appear ;
Hoarse breathes the wint'ry storm afar.
Hark ! from the sea-beat shore I hear
The din of elemental war !

Fierce on my roof the rattling hail
Its glassy flood tremendous pours ;
The tempest bellows in the vale ;
Aloud the bending forest roars.

Yet while convulsive nature's groan
Rocks earth upon her trembling pole,
A smile, dear girl, from thee alone,
Imparts calm sun-shine to my soul.

No wealth have I, nor fame nor pow'r,
(Tho' rich enough if lov'd by thee)
Yet thousands in this dreadful hour,
Would give all these to fare like me.

What numbers on the troubled deep,
Remote from friends, from kindred dear,
For wives belov'd, despairing weep,
For children, drop the bitter tear !

Safe, shelter'd from the dismal storm,
Love's chastest sweets my breast inspire
While in my cot, so snug and warm,
We sit around the cheerful fire.

How throbs my heart with purest joy,
While, mid these scenes of mutual bliss,
With cherub smiles, our infant boy
Implores the fond fraternal kiss.

O ! let me clasp thee to my breast,
And meet affection's cheering smile,
In chaste endearments lull to rest
My cares, my sorrows and my toil,

We'll trim the brisk enliv'ning fire,
Nor dread the wind that round us blows,
'Till sleep shall bid our thoughts retire
To pleasing dreams or soft repose.

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.

Contemplate when, the sun declines,
Thy death with deep reflection !
And when again he rising shines,
Thy day of resurection !

LOVE.

BY ANTHONY WHISTLER.

Let wisdom boast her mighty power,
With passion still at strife,
Yet *Love* is sure the sov'reign flower,
The sweet perfume of life ;

The happy breeze that swells the sail,
When quite becalm'd we lie ;
The drop that will the heart regale,
And sparkle in the eye ;

The sun that wakes us to delight,
And drives the shades away ;
The dream that cheers our dreary night,
And makes a brighter day.

But if, alas ! it wrongly seize,
The case is twice as bad :
This flow'r, sun, drop ; this dream and breeze,
Will drive the sufferer *mad*.

VERSIFICATION

Of that beautiful expression in Solomon's Song, "*Turn away thine eyes from me—they have overcome me.*"

BY THOMPSON.

O thou whose tender serious eyes
Expressive, speak the mind I love ;
The gentle azure of the skies,
The pensive shadows of the grove.

O mix their beauteous beams with mine
And let us interchange our hearts ;
Let all their sweetness on me shine,
Pour'd thro' my soul be all their darts.

Ah ! 'tis too much ! I cannot bear
At once so soft so keen a ray :
In pity turn, my lovely fair,
O turn those killing eyes away.

But what avails it to conceal
One charm, where nought but charms we see ?
Their lustre then again reveal,
And let me, MYRA, die of thee.

EPIGRAM ON AN EPIGRAM.

The qualities all in a *bee* that we meet,
In an Epigram never should fail ;
The body should always be little and sweet,
And a sting should be felt in its *tail*.

LIGHT ARTICLES.

Adam, says a Moorish author, after having eaten the forbidden fruit, sought to hide himself under the shade of the trees that formed the bower of Paradise: the gold and silver trees refused their shade to the father of the human race. God asked them why they did so: because, replied the trees, Adam has transgressed against your commandment. Ye have done well, answered the Creator; and that your fidelity may be rewarded, 'tis my decree, that men shall hereafter become your slaves, and that in search of you, they shall dig into the very bowels of the earth. *Chenier.*

Lord Say, Gibbon's ancestor, was beheaded 1450, by the Kentish insurgents. Jack Cade told him—"Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of this realm, in erecting a *grammar school*, and whereas before, our forefathers had no other books than the score and tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face, that thou hast men about thee who usually talk of a *noun* and a *verb*, and such abominable words as no Christian ear can endure to hear."

A SPARTAN BON MOT.—There are many persons of weak intellect, who place great value on very frivolous accomplishments, and become very vain of possessing them. A stranger came to Lacedaemon to see the city, who had acquired the habit of standing a long time on one leg. Exhibiting this trick to a Spartan, he told him vauntingly—"You could not preserve that posture so long."—"I know that," replied the Lacedaemonian, "but a goose can."

A certain novel writer takes an opportunity, in one of his volumes, where he abuses the trade of an author, to introduce Job, saying, "O! that mine enemy had written a book!" which he affirms to be the *bitterest wish* that ever came from his lips. Might he not have improved its severity by this slight alteration: "Oh! that mine enemy were obliged to read my book." That would perhaps have been a job for Job himself.

A fellow being brought before a magistrate in Dublin, on a charge of an assault, candidly acknowledged that he had a *hand* in *kicking* the plaintiff down stairs.

Dr. Grey, in his erudite and entertaining notes on Hudibras, records the deposition of a lawyer, who, in an action of battery, told the judge, that the defendant beat his client with a certain *wooden instrument* called an *iron pestle.*

A wise annotator on the Pentateuch, has observed of Moses' two *tables of stone*, that they were made of *shittim wood.*

A London paper observes, that a young man of the name of *Smart*, has invented an *infernal machine*, which is capable of destroying a *thousand men in a minute*; and remarks, that the *expence will be trifling*, when compared with its *utility.*

An English Clergyman, says a French writer, preaching before the court, said at the end of his sermon, that those who did not profit by what he had advanced, would go, and, forever and ever, inhabit a place which politeness would not suffer him to mention before such a respectable congregration.

MISCELLANEOUS INTELLIGENCE.

Proposals have been issued in this town for publishing by subscription, a selection of Bourdaloue's Sermons, translated by S. C. Blyth. Their high reputation and intrinsic merit, will make them a great addition to the library of any one. Bourdaloue is ranked by the author of the Pursuits of Literature, among the ablest writers on Christianity; and from the known talents of the Translator, we apprehend no injustice to the Author.

Philosophical and Mechanical discoveries and improvements.

Mr. Jacob Bouldin, of Baltimore, on the 14th ult. presented to the House of Representatives of the United States, his petition, stating that he is the author of the following valuable discoveries. If the asserted discoveries can be proved on trial, we may fairly take the lead of Europe, in the arts and sciences. The petition enumerates among other things,—Methods for constructing a machiue for taking courses, distances, ascents, descents, and true altitudes; for opening and extending inland navigation; for making of salt without the use of fuel; for constructing a cultivating machine; for introducing water into cities, &c. and for guarding buildings against the common accidents of fire, and certainly and promptly extinguishing the same; for constructing sea vessels and boats, in such a manner as to completely prevent them from springing of leaks or having their butts to start; and also for constructing an apparatus, whereby persons might save themselve in most cases, even after the loss of vessels, boats, &c. and praying that a sufficient sum from the national funds, may be placed in the hands of the executive for the purpose of making fair experiments therein.

A medal in honour of the memory of WASHINGTON has been struck at *Philadelphia*, under the direction of J. Reich, a German artist, upon the design of a person of taste, under the inspection of the director of the mint, the librarian of the philosophical society and other gentlemen of professional ability. Proof impressions in gold are sold at $ 50, silver at $ 5.

Congress have voted a gold medal to Gen. Eaton, for his military atchievements against the Tripolines.

MARRIAGES.

In this town, Mr. Josiah Dow, merchant, to Miss Rebecca Maria Phippen.
Mr. John Learock, to Miss Hannah Breed.

DIED,

"This morning, after a short but severe illness, Mr. John Gunnison, aged 22. In the death of this young man, society has lost a worthy member, the church a beloved brother, and an amiable female a tender and affectionate friend."

TO SUBSCRIBERS.

☞ The VISITANT will in future be published on Saturdays—it will not, therefore, appear again till the 18th inst.

We owe an apology to our Subscribers, that the VISITANT does not appear on better paper. We were disappointed by a paper-maker, and obliged to publish on such as we could obtain. We hope soon to remedy this evil.

Subscribers who do not receive their papers, are requested to leave their direction at the office of the Visitant.

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